

7 Things Church Members Should Say to Guests in a Worship Service

One of the more common questions I'm asked relates to growth barriers. For example, church leaders may want to know how to move past the 150-attendance level of the past five years. Or other leaders desire to know how to break through financial giving barriers.

Those questions are tough because they often presume a brief response to be adequate. In reality, there are many theological and methodological issues at work in growth barriers. Today, I am looking at a very basic barrier: lack of friendliness to church guests.

In a previous blog post, I noted things we should *not* say to a guest in our worship services. In today's post I look at the positive perspective: seven things we *should* say to guests.

1. "Thank you for being here." It's just that basic. I have heard from numerous church guests who returned because they were simply told "thank you."

2. "Let me help you with that." If you see someone struggling with umbrellas, young children, diaper bags, purses and other items, a gesture to hold something for them is a huge positive. Of course, this comment is appropriate for member to member as well.

3. "Please take my seat." I actually heard that comment twice in a church where I was speaking in the Nashville area. The first comment came from a member to a young family of five who were trying to find a place to sit together.

4. "Here is my email address. Please let me know if I can help

in any way.” Of course, this comment must be used with discretion, but it can be a hugely positive message to a guest.

5. “Can I show you where you need to go?” Even in smaller churches, guests will not know where to find the nursery, restrooms and small group meeting areas. You can usually tell when a guest does not know where he or she is to go.

6. “Let me introduce you to _____.” The return rate of guests is always higher if they meet other people. A church member may have the opportunity to introduce the guest to the pastor, other church staff and other members of the church.

7. “Would you join us for lunch?” I saved this question for last for two reasons. First, the situation must obviously be appropriate before you offer the invitation. Second, I have seen this approach have the highest guest return rate of any one factor. What if your church members sought to invite different guests 6 to 12 times a year? The burden would not be great; but the impact would be huge.

Let’s look at one example of breaking attendance barriers by saying the right things to guests. Presume your church has two first-time guests a week. Over the course of a year, the church would have 100 first-time guests. With most of the members being genuinely guest friendly, you could see half of those guests become active members. Attendance could thus increase by as much as 50 persons every year.

Good interaction with guests is a huge step toward breaking attendance barriers, but it is obviously not the only step. We are launching a new subscription ministry called Church Answers. One of the three resources you will get every month is called “Breaking Barriers.”

We are so excited about the response so far. **You can register here.** But registration closes in a few days, so hurry.

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